

A RARE SOBRALIA FROM COSTA RICA

BY
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Sobralia pleiantha Schlechter in Fedde Repert. 3 (1906) 79; in Fedde Repert. Beihefte 19 (1923) 81.

IN 1921, H. PITTIER discovered the type of *Sobralia pleiantha* in a forest near Boruca in southwestern Costa Rica. When Rudolf Schlechter described it, fifteen years later, he referred to the unusual nature of the inflorescence in having more than one flower expanded at a time. In *Sobralia*, usually, the flowers are produced singly, in succession, each flower remaining in perfection for a very few hours.

The plants attain a height of 8 decimeters or more, each slender stem bearing as many as ten elliptic-lanceolate, acuminate leaves which are articulated to elongated, closely appressed cylindrical, smooth sheaths. At the summit of the mature stems the flowers appear in an abbreviated raceme with complanate, distichous bracts. Each raceme produces as many as ten flowers. The lowermost flowers expand first and are in perfection while the terminal flowers are still in bud.

The sepals and petals are from 3–3.3 cm. long and about 1 cm. wide. The labellum, equally long, and about 2 cm. wide, is closely beset, along the central veins, with numerous, crowded, glandular processes. These processes are simple, bifurcate or several-times divided, those near the apex of the lamina being strongly complanate; those near the base being crowded into a pair of abbreviated keels; the margin of the labellum is finely denticulate almost to the base. The column is typical of the genus and attains a length of about 3 cm.

In the original description the labellum is described as being cuneate-obovate. In a drawing received from

EXPLANATION OF THE ILLUSTRATION

SOBRALIA PLEIANTHA Schlechter. Plant, natural size, drawn from a specimen of *Sketch 2484*. 1, labelum about twice natural size. 2 and 3, column, enlarged. Figures 1, 2 and 3 drawn with the aid of the camera lucida from flowers preserved in alcohol.

Drawn in July 1936 by BLANCHE AMES



SOBRALIA *pleiantha* Schltr.

Dr. Schlechter the labellum is strongly cuneate below the middle. In the specimens from which the accompanying plate was drawn, the labellum is elliptical and not at all cuneate below the middle.

The flowers on the plants collected by Skutch are not resupinate, and it is highly probable that this condition is to be explained by the stems having been pendent rather than erect.

COSTA RICA: Comarca de Puntarenas, near Boruca. In a forest, at 450 meters altitude. February, 1891. *H. Pittier 3855*. (TYPE in Herb. Mus. Bot. Berol. DUPLICATE TYPE in U. S. Nat. Herb.): Province of San José, vicinity of El General. On trees, at 880 meters altitude. Flowers cream. January, 1936. *Alexander F. Skutch 2484*.